

Department of Justice

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Mattoon Man Arrested in Alaska, Charged with Child Pornography Offenses

Peoria, Ill. – A federal grand jury has charged a Mattoon, Ill., man, Joseph W. Hoult, 25, with distribution, receipt, and possession of child pornography. Hoult, of the 2900 block of Shelby Ave., was previously charged in a criminal complaint filed on July 24, 2012.

Hoult was arrested on July 25, 2012, in Alaska. He appeared in federal court in Anchorage, Alaska, on July 26, and was ordered to be transported to the Central District of Illinois by the U.S. Marshals Service. A date for Hoult to appear in federal court in Urbana will be scheduled by the U.S. Clerk of the Court upon his return to Central Illinois.

The indictment, returned yesterday by the grand jury, charges Hoult with six counts of receiving and six counts of distribution of child pornography, as well as one count of possession of child pornography, on various dates in 2012. The indictment seeks forfeiture of computers and related materials allegedly used to commit or promote the offenses.

The charges were investigated by the Mattoon Police Department; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Homeland Security Investigations; and the East Central Illinois Cyber Crimes Working Group.

If convicted, the statutory penalty for each count of both distribution of child pornography and receipt of child pornography, is a mandatory minimum five years to 20 years in prison and a term of supervised release of up to life following any term of imprisonment. If a defendant has a prior child sex abuse or child pornography conviction, the statutory penalty is not less than 15 years and up to 40 years in prison. For possession of child pornography, the penalty is up to 10 years in prison.

Members of the public are reminded that an indictment is merely an accusation; the defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

The case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice. Led by U.S. Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafchildhood.gov.

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